

Chapter One

Administrative Data



Mount Gilead, ca. 1950. (Source: Smith, *Centreville, Virginia, Its History and Architecture*.)

Project Summary

Mount Gilead is a mid- to late 18th-century residential property located within the community of Centreville in western Fairfax County, Virginia. The property is currently owned by the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, but is in the process of being transferred to the Fairfax County Park Authority (Park Authority) due to its educational and interpretive value. In anticipation of assuming the role of stewards of Mount Gilead, the Park Authority engaged John Milner Associates, Inc., of Charlottesville, Virginia, to prepare a Cultural Landscape Report (CLR) for the property. The primary goal for the report was to collect, assemble, analyze, and present the information currently available about the property's cultural landscape. This information will be used by the Park Authority to guide their efforts to preserve and protect the landscape of Mount Gilead, while improving access to and interpretation of the site for the public.

This CLR is part of a broader planning process being conducted by the Park Authority to foster careful and deliberate preservation and interpretation of Mount Gilead. Work on this CLR preceded the Park Authority's efforts to develop a General Management Plan (GMP) for the property, which will ultimately serve as the guiding document for site management. The CLR is intended to provide a much-needed baseline documentation of

historic and existing conditions, a preliminary National Register-level evaluation of the property's historic significance, an integrity assessment, and a recommended approach to treatment for the site that will support Park Authority work on the GMP. The CLR was prepared without specific knowledge of a proposed future program and use for the property. Treatment plan recommendations therefore focus on establishing an appropriate series of preservation actions and do not address such issues as the siting of new features. This CLR should be updated and amended in the future to reflect the findings of the GMP, and be used to support the next phase of the planning process—the Conceptual Development Plan (CDP).

In addition to studying Mount Gilead proper, JMA was asked to consider the site for its role as one of five properties listed as contributing to the locally designated Centreville Historic Overlay District, which also includes St. John's Episcopal Church, the Centreville Methodist Church, Havener House, and Harrison House. The County is currently considering expanding the boundaries of this zoning overlay district. As part of the CLR, JMA was asked to suggest appropriate design guidelines for new development within the expanded district that reflect the understanding of the cultural landscape of Mount Gilead and the surrounding historic properties generated through this study. It is also of interest to note that the Mount Gilead CLR was prepared concurrently with a related Park Authority project—the Sully Woodlands Landscape Assessment—which incorporated historic and analytical data from the CLR into a broader consideration of regional parks, also conducted by JMA.

The CLR is divided into six chapters. Chapter One—Introduction—summarizes the purpose of the project; outlines the project scope of work; describes the methodology utilized by the project team in completing the tasks associated with the scope of work; and presents an overview of project findings. Chapter Two—Site History—documents the physical evolution of the Mount Gilead landscape based on the assimilation of available information supplemented by limited directed research. Chapter Two is heavily illustrated with historic maps and photographs to support an understanding of the evolution of Mount's Gilead's physical landscape over time. Chapter Three—Existing Conditions—depicts the property's existing landscape conditions through narrative description, contemporary photographs, maps, and diagrams. Chapter Four—Analysis and Evaluation—compares historic and existing landscape conditions and assesses their National Register-level significance and integrity. Chapter Five—Treatment Plan—proposes long-term management and design strategies to further the Park Authority's goal of protecting Mount Gilead's historic character and its cultural and natural resources. Finally, Chapter Six—Centreville Historic Overlay District Design Guidelines—suggests a series of appropriate parameters to guide new development within an expanded historic overlay district based upon an understanding of the features, qualities, and spatial relationships that have characterized the area historically.

Location and Description of Property

See figure 1-1, Context, Location, and Vicinity Maps.

Mount Gilead is located within the community of Centreville, which lies in the western portion of Fairfax County, Virginia. The 6.9-acre property is sited just northeast of the intersection of State Routes 28 and 29, at 5714 Mount Gilead Road, on parcel #0038A of Fairfax County Property Identification Map 054-4-01. The property is edged to the northwest by a residential subdivision, to the northeast and southeast by Mount Gilead Road, and to the southwest by Braddock Road and two historic properties. It forms approximately one-third of the 17-acre Centreville Historic Overlay District, which extends to the south and east of the property. The district is associated with zoning regulations meant to protect local historic resources.¹

The primary features of the property include the 18th century Mount Gilead House, an early 20th century garage, a Sears kit house, three small outbuildings, a small family cemetery, a springhouse, the archaeological remains of 18th-century tanyard operations, remnants of a formal garden, Colonial Revival-era plantings, road traces, and the remnants of Civil War-era earthworks.

Project Scope

The scope of the work for this CLR, as identified by the Park Authority upon initiation of the project, includes the following tasks:

- Research the historic background of the landscape to determine how it has changed over time, and document its probable appearance during the designated period of significance.
- Explore any historic connections between this property and surrounding sites located within the Centreville Historic Overlay District.
- Document the existing landscape features, including vegetation, roadbeds, archaeological features, views, and spatial organization of the Mount Gilead site and note important features of the surrounding historic district.
- Analyze and assess the information gathered about Mount Gilead in detail and the Centreville Historic Overlay District in a more general way.
- Provide treatment recommendations to enable Park Authority staff to better manage the cultural landscape of Mount Gilead.

¹ See *Fairfax County Zoning Ordinance*, Part 2, 7-200: “Historic Overlay Districts” section for details.

- Provide design guidelines for new development within the Centreville Historic Overlay District.

Project Methodology

The Mount Gilead CLR has been prepared in accordance with the guidance offered in the most recent versions of various federal standards documents, including:

- *A Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports: Contents, Process, and Techniques*;
- NPS Director's Order #28: *Cultural Resource Management Guidelines* (release 5);
- NPS-77: *Natural Resources Management Guidelines*;
- *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes*;
- *The Uniform Federal Accessibility Standard* (UFAS) and *Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines* (ADAAG);
- The National Park Service's *Guiding Principles of Sustainable Design*;
- National Register Bulletin 15: *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*;
- National Register Bulletin 18: *How to Evaluate and Nominate Designed Historic Landscapes*; and
- National Register Bulletin 30: *Guidelines for Documenting and Evaluating Rural Historic Landscapes*.

In addition, the methodology used by project team members in preparing each portion of the CLR is described in detail below.

Project Initiation – Project Meeting #1

In August 2005, CLR project team members gathered at the offices of the Park Authority for an initial project meeting and site visit. Meeting attendees included:

Fairfax County Park Authority

- Michael Rierison, Manager, Resource Stewardship Branch
- Charles Smith, Natural Resource Management and Protection
- Katarina Spears, Ellanor C. Lawrence Park, Site Historian
- Sherry Frear, Park Planning and Development Division

Historic Centreville Society

- Debbie Robison

John Milner Associates

- Liz Sargent, Project Manager
- Adriane Fowler, Landscape Architectural Designer

During the meeting, the team established project procedures and methods for accessing various materials available through Park Authority personnel. During the meeting, Michael Rierson indicated that the Park Authority was in the process of digitizing a series of historic aerial photographs of the site and the area. He offered to provide these to JMA when they became available. Existing conditions base mapping, however, was not available. The Park Authority indicated that Liz Crowell would be the primary point of contact for providing relevant archaeological data and reports relating to investigations of the Mount Gilead House and the associated tanyard. Katarina Spears agreed to provide JMA with an electronic copy of a Civil War period map useful for the project.

Historical Research Methodology

Work on the site history for Mount Gilead began with an understanding of the other studies that have been prepared to date about the property and the district, including the 1986 “Centreville Historic District,” booklet, Eugenia B. Smith’s *Centreville, Virginia, Its History and Architecture, Historical Highlights of Bull Run Park*, and various archaeological and architectural investigations provided on or about the time of the project start-up meeting.

Landscape historian Jacky Taylor subsequently met with Debbie Robison, a local resident who has conducted extensive research into the history of Centreville. Ms. Robison offered to provide the team with copies of her primary source research findings into Mount Gilead and neighboring properties. After reviewing Ms. Robison’s material, Ms. Taylor conducted additional research in an attempt to fill any gaps in the knowledge of Mount Gilead’s landscape history needed to prepare the CLR. Specifically, Ms. Taylor visited the Virginia Room of the Fairfax County Library, the University of Virginia’s Alderman Library, and online sites associated with the Library of Virginia and the Library of Congress. Materials investigated include historic photographs of Mount Gilead and Centreville, historic maps, court records, and census records. Articles and essays in the *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* and the *William and Mary Quarterly* were also of interest. Investigations led to online sites of interest associated with Centreville and the Civil War Battles of Manassas. Where information about the specific history of the property remained lacking, additional research was conducted to develop contextual documentation that would suggest the ways in which broad historical trends may have influenced the physical character of the property.

Base Mapping Methodology

Due to the lack of an existing base map for the property appropriate for use in developing the CLR, JMA offered to create a new AutoCAD map using a combination of Geographical Information System (GIS) data and a high-resolution aerial photograph. Boundary, topography, and road information was imported into AutoCAD from GIS and used as a framework within which additional features, such as tree cover, circulation systems, fencelines, and small-scale features, were drawn from the high resolution aerial photograph. A draft of the base map was field checked during field investigations conducted in mid-September 2005, and amended as necessary. The file was revised before being used as the basis for most of the mapping included within the CLR.

Existing Conditions Methodology

Initial fieldwork to document existing conditions at Mount Gilead was conducted on July 21, 2005, by JMA personnel Adriane Fowler, Jacky Taylor, Sallie Holt, and Jes Koepfler. The team took photographs of landscape features and buildings and recorded their locations on a draft base map derived from GIS data. Additional field investigations were conducted by Adriane Fowler and Liz Sargent on August 3, 2005, after the project start-up meeting. Field investigations to ground truth the draft base map and augment earlier documentation efforts were conducted on September 15, 2005, by Julie Basic and Laura Knott.

Documentation of existing conditions was subsequently prepared through review and compilation of base mapping, aerial photography, U.S.G.S. quad mapping, field investigations, Fairfax County soil survey information; review of photographs taken in the field; and an examination of Park Authority planning documents. The CLR team utilized these materials collectively to prepare a cross-referenced narrative, graphic, and photographic depiction of landscape features associated with the property in accordance with the guidelines provided in National Register Bulletin 18: *How to Evaluate and Nominate Designed Historic Landscapes*, and National Register Bulletin 30: *Guidelines for Documenting and Evaluating Rural Historic Landscapes*. Based on the guidance offered in the bulletins, documentation of existing landscape features and qualities was organized into a series of landscape characteristics as follows:

- landform and topography and natural systems and features;
- topographic modifications;
- spatial organization;
- views and vistas;
- land uses;
- circulation;
- vegetation;
- buildings and structures;
- small-scale features; and
- archaeological resources.

Photographs of representative landscape features are included in the Existing Conditions chapter of the CLR. These are referenced in the text, and their photographic station points are indicated on a base map included within the chapter. The CLR also includes an inventory of the features documented. The inventory serves as the basis for identifying contributing and non-contributing resources in the Analysis and Evaluation chapter of the CLR.

The existing conditions documentation is preceded by an introductory section describing the regional environmental context and setting of the Mount Gilead property. A less detailed description of the Centreville Historic Overlay District landscape follows the Mount Gilead landscape documentation.

Evaluation of Significance Methodology

Mount Gilead is currently not listed in the National Register of Historic Places. As part of the development of this CLR, the team prepared a National Register-level evaluation of significance of the property. The CLR presents information that is consistent with a National Register significance evaluation, including the property's likely level of significance, criteria and areas of significance, period of significance, and the historic contexts within which the property should be evaluated. The CLR relied upon the guidance offered in National Register Bulletin 15: *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation* in developing this portion of the report.

Comparative Analysis Methodology

In order to better understand the relationship between the existing landscape of Mount Gilead and the character of the landscape during its likely period of significance, JMA prepared a comparative analysis of historic and existing landscape conditions. The three primary goals of the development of the comparative analysis were to:

- understand which features survive from the period of significance;
- establish the basis for an integrity assessment; and
- provide an understanding of the similarities and differences between historic and existing conditions that would contribute to the development of a well-grounded treatment plan for the cultural landscape.

Through the development of the comparative analysis of historic and existing landscape conditions, contributing features were identified. Contributing features are those resources that survive from the period of significance identified in the significance evaluation. Non-contributing features are those resources that originated after the period of significance. Missing features are those resources that are known or thought to have existed during the period of significance, but that are no longer evident, except possibly in the archaeological record. Conjectural information is indicated as such in conjunction with the assessments.

Assessment of Integrity Methodology

The property's overall integrity was assessed in accordance with the seven aspects—location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association—described in National Register Bulletin 15: *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*. The information gleaned from the comparative analysis was utilized to assess the integrity of the property as it relates to the identified period of significance. Comparative photography was utilized as one of the tools for assessing the degree of change that has occurred on the property over time, and thus supported the integrity assessment.

Treatment Plan Methodology

The Mount Gilead CLR treatment plan was prepared in accordance with the guidance offered in the National Park Service's *A Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports: Content, Process, and Techniques*. It is intended to meet the Park Authority's projected needs, goals, and objectives for future management of the property, specifically providing a treatment approach and recommendations that are consistent with professionally recognized preservation standards and federal guidelines. Due to the fact that work on the CLR preceded a GMP for the property, the treatment plan does not address specific program elements or adaptive reuse of the property except to identify sites and features that are highly sensitive to change, and areas that might be considered for the siting of certain types of programming after additional study is conducted.

JMA initiated work on the treatment plan for Mount Gilead by considering the four alternatives for treating historic sites presented in the Secretary of the Interior's "Standards for Historic Preservation" and their application to the Mount Gilead property. After evaluating the alternatives, JMA recommended that the Park Authority consider Rehabilitation as the overarching treatment alternative for the property. JMA also provided recommendations for establishing management zones within the property that allow for the development of site- or resource-specific treatment recommendations. Based on these recommendations, JMA then prepared a treatment plan, comprised of treatment recommendations relating to resource protection, rehabilitation, and/or restoration; staffing the property; interpretation; maintenance; and the role of ongoing and future investigations in site development and interpretation.

Design Guidelines Methodology

The design guidelines portion of this report was developed after the majority of the work on the Mount Gilead treatment plan had been completed. An internal JMA team of landscape architects and landscape and architectural historians first reviewed the significance of the property and the district, and the recommended approach to treatment for Mount Gilead. An in-house charette to consider an overall concept for the district was then conducted. Design guidelines were subsequently drafted based on the approach identified in the workshop, and through review of various models available in JMA's library of guidelines prepared for similar districts.

Summary of Findings

Although it is not currently listed in the National Register of Historic Places, the Mount Gilead property appears eligible for listing at the state level under National Register Criteria A, C, and D within the areas of Architecture, Military History, Historical Archaeology, and Community Development/Planning. The likely period of significance for the property spans the years ca. 1785 to 1937.

The property retains numerous cultural resources that appear to contribute to its significance during this period. These range from the 18th century house and site of a former summer kitchen, to later Colonial Revival style features such as the garage, two small summerhouses, and boxwood plantings. Also contributing are visible remnants of Civil War-era earthworks, and archaeological evidence of Civil War-era occupation of the landscape around the house by Confederate, and later Union, soldiers. There are also roads and road traces, plantings, a family cemetery, and property boundary delineation features that survive from the period of significance and contribute to an understanding of Mount Gilead's significant history.

Based on the extent of its surviving historic landscape, and the large degree of undeveloped open space that contributes to its historic setting and feeling, the Mount Gilead House and its environs stands as an oasis, an island of open, rural green space that constitutes a place of refuge, respite, and escape from the dense residential and commercial development that is encroaching upon the historic village of Centreville. Protection of the property's historic resource values, as well as its character—reminiscent of a bygone era—should be the most important goal for future management of the property. Under the stewardship of the Park Authority, it is anticipated that the site will be protected to the fullest extent possible, and its potential to accommodate visitors and provide interpretive and educational opportunities will be carefully considered.

The CLR's treatment plan considers the sensitivity of all surviving historic cultural and natural resources located on the property, and provides recommendations for protecting important features, systems, and relationships. Based upon the need to accommodate visitors, the CLR recommends that Rehabilitation serve as the overarching approach to treating the historic landscape. Despite the overarching approach of Rehabilitation for the property, the treatment recommendations for Mount Gilead are weighted heavily in favor of the Preservation-related spectrum of Rehabilitation whenever possible. Any new development proposed for the site should be carefully considered, and have as little permanent impact on the landscape as possible.

Protection of the open space and garden-like qualities of the house environs, despite the need for establishing new visitor access and interpretation improvements, is highly recommended. Screening views of incompatible surrounding conditions and uses may be a necessary tool for maintaining the integrity of feeling and association of the property. Based on an understanding of the property and its context, the feeling of the Mount Gilead site is unrivaled within the area. Its unspoiled character should be protected at all costs, particularly when faced with the challenges of allowing for visitor access. Creative means for addressing the development of new features to accommodate visitors, such as parking, site furnishings, interpretive opportunities, and special events should be promoted. These should favor establishment of the smallest possible development footprint, and the use of reversible or removable solutions wherever possible. Consideration should be paid to siting new features along the perimeter of the property, on adjacent properties, or in the least sensitive areas of the property. New development should be sited whenever possible along the Braddock Road corridor where it can strengthen the existing streetscape, if consistent with the historic character of the corridor. Design guidelines for the Centreville Historic Overlay District suggest that the Braddock

Road corridor become a vibrant pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use corridor that derives its character from an understanding of the village's historic features. The Mount Gilead treatment plan is therefore tied to these recommendations.

Development of new interpretive activities in association with the Spindle House area could provide a community focal point for the Braddock Road corridor and surrounding Centreville developments, taking pressure off the Mount Gilead House environs. To encourage and strengthen the connections between the local community and the historic district, the treatment plan recommends the rehabilitation of a former road corridor through the property as a pedestrian path. The rehabilitated road would invite the public to become a part of the Mount Gilead property, while establishing a link with the historic Braddock Road corridor and the remainder of the district. The treatment of natural resources within the site, including vegetation and water resources, is intended to promote sustainability and sensitivity to ecological considerations. Finally, the treatment plan recommends that the site-specific connections between natural and cultural resources be highlighted in interpretive programs, and tied to the Park Authority's existing management practices that promote sustainability.

Recommendations for Further Study

During the final few weeks of this project, numerous new materials relating to the history of the Mount Gilead property and the associated Spindle House property have surfaced. Many have been provided by families with former ownership ties to the land. The Park Authority has already begun to collect, assemble, and analyze these new materials. Many arrived too late, however, to become an integral part of the CLR. The first recommendation for further study associated with this report is that these materials be assembled into an appendix or companion document to this report, and be utilized in any future CLR update. In addition, the following recommendations have been generated through preparation of this CLR:

- Prepare a National Register nomination for the Mount Gilead property.
- Conduct oral histories with community members, particularly long-time residents, to better understand the significance of the site and the manner in which it has been used over time. Consider soliciting information regarding the role that Mount Gilead has played within the Centreville community.
- Conduct oral histories with CK Gailey and Larry Moore to record additional information about the excavation of the Adams tanyard.
- Obtain archaeological information to complete the tanyard archaeological report.
- Continue to investigate and document the potential burial sites of the Morrisses on the Spindle House property.
- Investigate the historical development of Centreville's mercantile economy including what other industries and commercial establishments existed and who owned them.

- Conduct a survey of the architecture of regional vernacular dwellings and taverns, such as Mount Gilead, to support the historic context for the property. Also conduct a survey of regional turnpikes and the way in which their construction influenced the development of new communities.
- Consider conducting additional research into the Carrol B. Carter and E.C. Lawrence/Walney properties to glean information about the physical landscape around Mount Gilead.

